DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 704 IR 001 556

AUTHOR Swarm, Christine C.
TITLE Multi-Media-Fad or Reality?
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Aids; Audiovisual Centers; Instructional Materials; *Instructional Media; *Instructional Technology; Library Networks; Library Services; Mass Media; Media Selection; *Media Technology; Multimedia Instruction; School Libraries; Teacher Developed Materials

ABSTRACT

The idea that the multimedia concept is a fad is described as nonsense, and its broadening and far-reaching realm in society is detailed. The type of media found in a school library media center and their applications are listed for the benefits of teachers. Ways in which media can be used to encourage student interest are discussed. Teachers are urged to preview materials and also to be conscious of student familiarity with cassettes, records, films, and filmstrips in the home. The use of multimedia materials is said not to be a panacea, but a way of helping children benefit from a variety of choices. (SK)

ED101704

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MULTI-MEDIA -- FAD OR REALITY?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

by

Dr. Christine C. Swarm

IR 001 556

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Much of the lively discussion about the concept of multi-media being a fad is just pure nonsense. Neither is the idea of multi-media futuristic in scope. The usage of multi-media is very much present in our society. The totality of the realm in our everyday lives, which multi-media encompasses, is very broadening and far-reaching. In essence, multi-media is here to stay.

Perhaps the most popular application of the multi-media concept is found in the school library media center, which houses and stores all types of media - from the traditional print materials to the more recent nontraditional nonprint materials. The types of multi-media that teachers and students have access to run the gamut from books to-filmstrips, study prints, disc recordings, slides, tapes (both reel-to-reel and cassette), film loops, microforms, microfilm, posters, transparencies, films (8mm and 16mm), multi-media kits, realia kits-to television for both educational and recreational purposes.

The visual and aural formats offered by these diverse types of media are certainly an asset to many students. Nonbook materials are appearing on the educational horizon at a very rapid rate. In fact, it was not until just recently that one of the foremost jobbers in the United States expanded from print material dissemination to include nonprint materials as well. The idea of a centralized ordering firm for nonprint or multi-media materials is certainly a positive indicator that the multi-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

media concept is hereby recognized as a lasting entity. While perusing the number of different catalogs from this jobber, it was amazing to see the multitude and diversity among the types of titles available from the many publishers of media that were available. This involvement and expansion by many publishers is a positive indication that the multi-media idea is not just a passing fad.

The 1969 Standards For School Media Programs, as espoused by the American Library Association, defines media as all printed and audio-visual forms of communication and their accompanying hardware for the purposes of viewing and listening. Thus, the multi-media concept is based on providing many types of media for reading and listening purposes.

This whole realm of multi-media was brought to our attention quite vividly by Marshall McLuhan about a decade ago. From that time on, educators in particular, and society, in general, have become more and more multi-media conscious. The knowledge of the historical development of the role media communications has played in our society has formed the basis for future understanding of the whole field of many types of print and nonprint materials.

Educational changes have forced varied communications approaches. Thus, a multi-faceted media approach to learning has come to the forefront much faster than educators were able to comprehend. Such educational changes as team teaching, individualized learning, programmed learning, mini-courses, and a plethora of other types of learning experiences have stressed as their base

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a multi-media approach to learning. The increasing awareness of teacher's use of different learning modalities for students has come into the educational systems. And, with this, has come nontraditional learning techniques and methods. The new media that has been developed for these various methods of instruction carries its own dynamic communication/learning messages.

With the increasing integration of print and nonprint materials, e.g., talking texts for students with difficulty in reading, students are becoming more interested in learning. The multitude of nontraditional learning materials available to them is fascinating and enjoying as they explore these nontraditional learning means. Since the present educational trend appears to center on individualized learning experiences, the multi-media concept cannot be ignored, as media plays a very prominent role in these types of learning processes. Both teachers and students can profit from the use of many different and varied types of print and nonprint media. The teacher can now present a much wider scope of subject matter via incorporating into the curriculum a much wider variety of audio and/or visual experiences. These may be done separately or in a combination in order to lay the groundwork for small group interaction or individual learning experiences. The integrated use of print and nonprint materials has enhanced and expanded the learning experience of individuals. Media has been used by many in the teaching/learning process with a high

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

rate of success. Learning via the multi-media concept can be a fascinating and rewarding experience when all the varied types of available media are employed and utilized.

To realize the potential from multi-media, one must not be a stranger to availability, format, and grade level. The role of the multi-media specialist in the school is one of guidance and encouragement in the use of multi-media materials. This person must be an expert in all types of learning media and must know how, when, and where to correlate and integrate the use of multi-media with the basic classroom presented material. This responsibility lies in the key role of helping decide when to use books along with a variety of other types of multi-media and electronic devices.

Many times, varied aspects of multi-media utilization have gone begging because of ignorance as to availability and the techniques needed to employ it for usage. Teachers need to provide a most efficacious match of multi-media for themselves and their students. They can be limited, however, by a lack of techniques and materials available. Here is where the idea of production services comes into sharp focus. The production element is not one to be separated from the totality of the multi-media concept as it can help greatly in unlocking undiscovered talents in both teachers and students as they make their own slides, transparencies, filmstrips, and other types of media. Range and depth of services can also be increased greatly by the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

production of one's own types of multi-media materials.

In order to know what types of multi-media are available, one has to be able to see and view the media firsthand. Involved in this is the idea of helping to select what multi-media forms are acquired by the school library media center. After careful preview of the materials ordered, those that it is felt would be a definite asset to the educational program should be acquired. With such a diversity and variety among the disseminators of multi-media forms, it is best to order all of these types of materials on a preview-first basis. The cost of many types of nonprint materials is quite prohibitive; and since budgets are at an all-time low in most school systems and since inflation has not overlooked the producers of audio-visual media, every dollar must be spent wisely. There are many truly beautiful types of nonprint media being introduced today that it is a shame the students must be deprived of them because of the budget squeeze. But, by employing the preview-first technique, those materials can be eliminated that are not quality in format even though their catalog description reads like an advertisement for a luxurious fur coat with a reduced bargain basement price tag.

Society has shown an increased interest in multi-media. The multi-media concept must not be discussed in isolation from the home. With the sudden appearance of cassette tapes, records, and, yes, even filmstrips in our department and grocery stores, the multi-faceted form of media seems to have come alive and caught-on.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Multi-media forms are now much easier to acquire than they were five years ago. While looking through Audiovisual Market Place, A Multimedia Guide, this author was amazed to learn that there are literally hundreds of producers and distributors of audiovisual media. There has been an increase in the number of producers and distributors of media within the past several years.
The cost has been reduced somewhat for the aforementioned items thus making them popular retail items with the chain and discount stores. When one thinks of the sudden upsurge in sales of these items, one must stop and realize that the appropriate hardware for listening and viewing must be accessible or available in the home. If only such early educators as Horace Mann could be here to see the technological educational advances that have been made, he would be delighted to see his educational dream now a reality. After all, he was thought to be putting his neck on the chopping block back in the early Massachusetts educational system when he advocated having a picture of the world in every classroom and home if at all possible! What would he think if he could now visit many homes and see the multi-media forms that are considered mere commonplace items among many families?

The producers of multi-media have progressed far in the quality of the nonprint media they are producing. Gone are the shoddy, distasteful format of most items -- enter instead the colorful, factual design and quality of nonprint materials. Today's forms of nonprint media are truly an exciting art. Producers and designers, illustrators, etc., have responded to the greatly

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

marked need for quality multi-media materials. Dynamic style of presentation has also been greatly improved. The variety of media available has become tumultuous, as is evidenced by the aforementioned statistics. All trends have to start somewhere, and the trend of all members of society being able to acquire and possess multi-media materials can be viewed as phenomenal. This need has been derived from the pragmatic desire of the consumer. The intercommunication between teachers, media specialists, producers and consumers, too, has greatly enhanced the improved quality of multi-media materials. These are truly productive times in the field of media education brought on by a sudden increased awareness of society to these diverse forms and their application whether for educational or recreational purposes.

There has been a better relationship of print of sound and of image established. The understanding of the forces that can be generated from the integrated use of multi-media materials to educate and fill societal needs has been very long in arriving. But, it is here now; and the most should be made of this opportunity to convey the messages relayed by the use of these types of varied media. With the introduction of newer types of media and their accompanying hardware, a new means of integration with the older types of media will have to be initiated. Dissemination systems will have to be devised to accommodate these different types of multi-media. The encouraging fact is that multi-media integration is becoming not just educational terminology but a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

common household word as well.

In a recent survey done by this author in her instructional media classes comprised of teachers, librarians, laymen, and undergraduate students, it was learned that today's children and their parents appear to be very multi-media conscious. They are utilizing the public libraries for all types of media that interest them. The children seem to be shying away from sole print media to that consisting of a more varied, colorful visual and aural format. In surveying this same group of individuals, it was also discovered that many of the children have the accompanying hardware available in their respective homes with which to view or listen to the materials selected.

With all these facts before us, will this sudden demand for many types of media stop? Hopefully, it will not. Educators should be happy and pleased that children are able to acquire and utilize the many diverse multi-media forms that are becoming so readily available to them. The multi-media idea is not a fad - nor is it a futuristic concept. It is not a temporary aberration but one that is lasting and quite rapidly becoming a reality in the totality of the current educational and home scene. The multi-media concept is here to stay - and it is about time that all realize it and utilize more of the many different types of print and nonprint learning materials that are appearing with such rapidity on the educational and recreational spectrum. The multi-media approach is not the educational panacea for educating the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

youth of our society, but it certainly can help them benefit by increasing the variety of materials offered from which to learn and to be entertained.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. American Library Association. Standards For School Media Programs. A.L.A., 1969.

2. Audiovisual Market Place; A Multimedia Guide 1974-75. Bowker, 1974.

3. Davies, Ruth A. The School Library Media Center: A Force For Educational Excellence. Bowker, 1974.

4. Gaver, Mary A. Services of Secondary School Media Centers: Evaluation and Development. American Library Association, 1971.